

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TAIPEI 04107 281019Z

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CIVS, SCUL, PFOR, TW, CH

SUBJECT: CHINA STARS SONG ENSEMBLE

REF: STATE 136888

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY BELIEVES WE SHOULD APPROACH GROC IN TAIPEI AND WASHINGTON FOR CANDID DISCUSSION REGARDING HANDLING OF ROC AND PRC CULTURAL GROUPS IN US. SO AS TO MINIMIZE FUTURE PROBLEMS WITH BOTH OFFICIAL AND COMMERCIAL GROUPS. HOWEVER, ROLE OF ROC CONSUL GENERAL NEW YORK IN "CHINA STARS" AFFAIR SUGGESTS WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PROBLEMS. URGE THEREFORE THAT WE TIGHTEN OUR PROCEDURES SO WE CAN BEGIN TO COPE EARLIER IN THE GAME.

END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY INFORMED STEPHEN LOW OF ORIENTAL MELODIES JUNE 26 THAT VISAS WILL BE ISSUED TO CHINA STARS GROUP 08:30 LOCAL TIME JULY 11.

3. ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOT CERTAIN THAT GROC, AS AN INSTITUTION, WAS DELIBERATELY INVOLVED, WE ARE IN NO DOUBT THAT CERTAIN GROC OFFICIALS PROMOTED CHINA STARS GROUP IN KNOWLEDGE IT WOULD COINCIDE WITH PRC'S WU SHU TROUPE. THERE ARE TWO POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR THIS

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TAIPEI 04107 281019Z

BEHAVOIR:

A) GROC ELEMENTS MAY HAVE UNDERESTIMATED DEGREE OF US CONCERN AND SAW AN OPPORTUNITY TO COUNTER PRC ACTIVITIES IN US; OR

B) RECOGNIZING RISK OF ADVERSE USG REACTION, THEY NEVERTHELESS BELIEVED GROC INTERESTS BETTER SERVED BY PUBLIC CULTURAL CHALLENGE TO PRC IN US THAN BY QUIET ACCEPTANCE OF US EFFORTS TO AVOID CONFRONTATION.

4. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS PARALLEL REPRESENTATIONS TO GROC IN WASHINGTON AND TAIPEI ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

A. RATHER THAN HARP ON NATURE OF PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS, POINT OUT DIFFICULTIES WITH CHINA STARS, REPEAT WARNINGS ABOUT ADVERSE EFFECTS OF NON-COOPERATION ON US ATTITUDES TOWARD GROC, AND STATE WE WISH TO AVOID SIMILAR PROBLEMS IN THE FUTURE.

B. PROMISE TO INFORM GROC IN THE FUTURE BOTH IN TAIPEI AND WASHINGTON WHEN PRC GROUPS ARE GOING TO THE US (PARA 5 BELOW) AND STATE THAT WE WILL EXPECT GROC TO ENSURE AGAINST ANY OFFICIAL ROC TROUPE BEING IN US WHEN A PRC TROUPE WILL BE THERE.

C. EXPLAIN THAT SAME RULES MUST APPLY TO ANY "PRIVATE" GROUP WHICH HAS ANY HELP, ENDORSEMENT, OR ASSOCIATION WITH ROC OFFICIALS. SPECIFICALLY CALL TO THEIR ATTENTION KONSIN SHAH'S INVOLVEMENT WITH CHINA STARS GROUP.

D. ADD THAT AT A MINIMUM WE ASK THE GROC TO COOPERATE WITH US TO PREVENT ANY COMMERCIAL GROUP OF WHICH IT HAS KNOWLEDGE FROM GOING TO US WHEN PRC TROUPE IN US. (WE MUST RECOGNIZE, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO WAY TO CONTROL SMALL PRIVATE GROUPS WHICH TRAVEL TO US AND CANADA FOR EXTENDED STAYS LONG BEFORE ARRIVAL OF A PRC GROUP, OR EVEN BEFORE DECISION TO SEND A PRC GROUP).

E. AVOID MENTIONING THAT GROC FAILURE TO COOPERATE IN
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TAIPEI 04107 281019Z

A GIVEN CASE WILL RESULT IN OUR NON-ISSUANCE OF VISAS, SINCE THIS PROSPECT TENDS TO UNDERCUT OUR APPEAL FOR GROC COOPERATION ON NON-GROC SPONSORED GROUPS; OBVIOUSLY IT IS MORE PALATABLE TO THEM TO LEAVE ONUS ON US.

5. IN ADDITION WE RECOMMEND FOLLOWING CONTROL PROCEDURES WHICH WOULD ALSO HELP REMIND GROC OF OUR DETERMINATION TO AVOID SIMILAR LAST MINUTE PROBLEMS IN FUTURE:

A. DEPARTMENT INFORM EMBASSY TAIPEI (AS WELL AS ROC EMBASSY WASHINGTON) WHEN PRC GROUP IS SCHEDULED TO GO TO US AND WHEN FINAL ITINERARY AVAILABLE. WE WILL THEN INFORM MOFA AND REMIND THEM WE EXPECT GROC TO AVOID SIMULTANEOUS PRESENCE OF ROC GROUP IN US.

B. REQUEST INS EITHER CLEAR WITH DEPARTMENT ALL PETITIONS FOR PERFORMING ARTISTS FROM TAIWAN OR, IF THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE, NOTIFY DESK WHEN PETITIONS APPROVED. SINCE ALL PERFORMING ARTISTS ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE H PETITIONS APPROVED BY INS BEFORE GOING TO US, DEPARTMENT WOULD UNDER THIS SYSTEM KNOW AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE ABOUT UNOFFICIAL ROC GROUPS. IN LAST TWELVE MONTHS EMBASSY HAS ISSUED ONLY 465 H VISAS IN ALL CATEGORIES--INCLUDING ONLY 3 OR 4 PERFORMING ART GROUPS (APPROXIMATELY 60 VISAS), AND THIS REQUIREMENT SHOULD NOT ADD APPRECIABLY TO DESK'S WORKLOAD. WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO MONITOR ALL APPLICATIONS THROUGH EMBASSY CONSULAR SECTION.

6. DESPITE PROPOSED DEMARCHE AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS, WE MUST REALISTICALLY BE PREPARED FOR SIMILAR PROBLEMS IN THE FUTURE. MANY ROC OFFICIALS DO NOT SHARE OUR APPRIASAL OF ROC INTERESTS IN THIS MATTER AND SOME OF THEM ARE QUITE POWERFUL. OTHER FACTORS MAY ALSO COMPLICATE MATTER. FOR EXAMPLE WE FOUND MOFA VERY CAUTIOUS IN DEALING WITH FONSIN SHAH, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE HE IS HIGH-RANKING DIPLOMAT, IS HUANG SHAO-KU'S SON-IN-LAW, AND APPARENTLY HAS WIDE-RANGING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EXTRA-DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES IN US.

7. WE HOPE THAT WE CAN MAINTAIN AURA OF IMPARTIALITY IN HANDLING ROC AND PRC TROUPES IN US. FURTHERMORE HOPE THAT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 TAIPEI 04107 281019Z

RULE OF REASON WILL APPLY AND THAT WE WILL NOT HAVE TO GO SO FAR AS TO PREVENT AN INCONSPICUOUS TAIWAN COMMERCIAL SONGSTRESS FROM APPEARING IN HONOLULU AT SAME TIME PRC ACROBATIC TROUPE APPEARS ON EAST COAST.
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